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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000426

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: UML ADVOCATES ALL-PARTY GOVERNMENT

REF: A. (A) KATHMANDU 0292

[1](#)B. (B) KATHMANDU 0312

Classified By: DCM ROBERT K. BOGGS. REASON: 1.5 (B,D).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) The Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (UML) began a month-long campaign on March 6 to create public support for an all-party interim government. Although UML sources were optimistic about garnering support for the plan from the other Parliamentary parties, none has so far publicly voiced support. Unfortunately for UML leader Madhav Nepal, however, news of the campaign has been crowded off the front page by coverage of a threatened split within the UML leadership. The UML will have to demonstrate that it can maintain unity within its own ranks before it can expect to persuade other parties to accept its leadership in an all-party government. End summary.

UML FLOATS ALL-PARTY GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL

[1](#)2. (SBU) On March 6 the Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (UML) began a month-long campaign to generate public and multi-partisan support for an all-party government to replace the interim government appointed by King Gyanendra in October. According to UML Central Committee Member Jhala Nath Khanal, the campaign will consist of mass meetings, seminars, and press conferences to be held at the national and district levels. Khanal said his party is confident its proposal will win the support of the other parties that had members in the previous Parliament. (Note: Implicit in the proposal is that an all-party government should be headed by the leader of the largest party--UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal. End note.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) Khanal admitted that the UML so far has no firm commitments from other parties to support the proposal. The most difficult to persuade, he conceded, will be the Nepali Congress, whose President G.P. Koirala continues to insist on reinstatement of the previous Parliament as the only acceptable alternative. The UML has not yet formally presented its proposal to King Gyanendra, but will do so once it can demonstrate that the Parliamentary parties support its approach. Khanal asserted that "some people closely connected to the Palace" had indicated the King would approve it.

[1](#)4. (C) The UML has not yet discussed the proposal "in depth" with the Maoists either, Khanal said. He raised the subject in February with unidentified Maoists who attended a conference in Switzerland with him on conflict resolution. The Maoists' reaction was ambivalent, he reported--"not against it" but unsure how an all-party government could be turned to their advantage.

GAUTAM STRAYS OFF PARTY LINE

[1](#)5. (SBU) Unfortunately for Madhav Nepal, media coverage of his party's campaign for multi-partisan unity was substantially overshadowed by press speculation of a potential split (again) in the UML's upper ranks. Bamdev Gautam, erstwhile leader of a breakaway, further-left faction that reunited with the UML one year ago, reportedly was censured by the Central Committee on March 6 for expressing public support for the proposed constituent assembly advocated by the Maoists. (Note: The official party line is that the UML is "open" to discussing the idea; privately, UML leaders have told us they do not support the proposal.) Khanal attempted to downplay the controversy, suggesting that the media had exaggerated the rift and denying that Gautam had been ordered to appear before the party's disciplinary committee.

COMMENT

16. (C) While the political parties have been united in their opposition to the non-party government appointed by the King in October, multi-partisan agreement on what should replace that government has continued to elude them. Despite Khanal's optimism, we have seen no signs that the other parties, which have more typically advocated proposals that ensure their own leadership in an alternative interim government, will sacrifice their partisan interests to put Madhav Nepal into office. The Maoists, who regard the more moderate UML as ideological traitors, may also play spoiler. Gautam's decision to buck party authority by advocating the constituent assembly--the Maoists' trademark demand--just as Madhav Nepal is trying to position himself as a national leader has the Maoists' fingerprints all over it. Gautam's very public position will make it difficult for Madhav Nepal to project himself as capable of leading an all-party government when he cannot even ensure full support within his own party.

MALINOWSKI